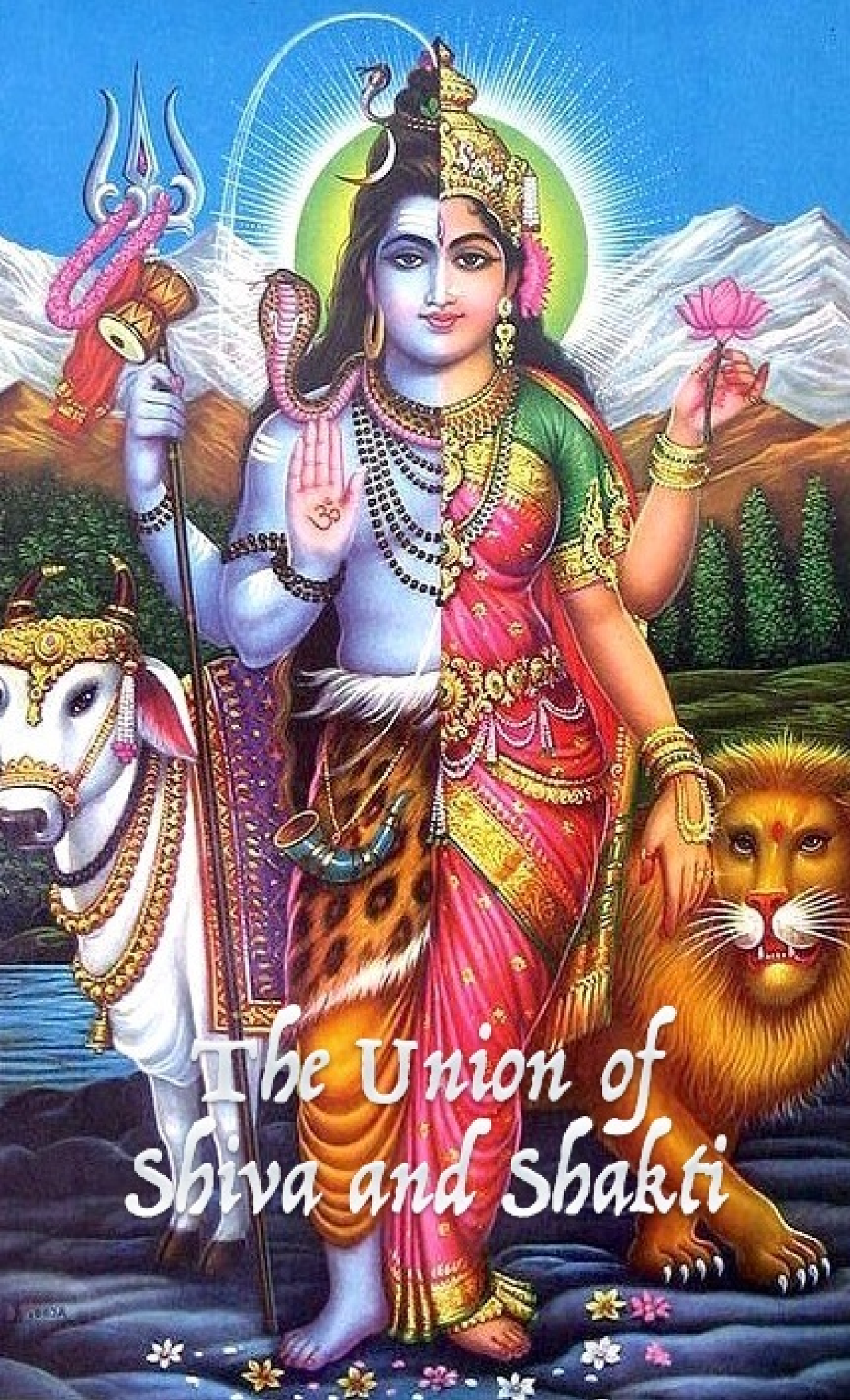
The Union of
Shiva and Shakti

1

I offer obeisance to the God and Goddess,
the limitless primal parents of the universe.

2

The lover, out of boundless love,
has become the Beloved.
Both are made of the same substance
and share the same food.

3

Out of love for each other, they merge;
and again, they separate
for the pleasure of being two.

4

They are not entirely the same,
nor are they not the same.
We cannot say exactly what they are.

5

Their one great desire is to enjoy each other;
yet they never allow their unity to be disturbed,
even as a joke.

6

They are so averse to separation

that even their child, the universe,
does not disturb their union.

7

Though they perceive the universe
of inanimate and animate creation
emanating from themselves, they do not
recognize a third.

8

They sit together on the same ground,
wearing the same garment of light.
From time past remembrance they have lived
thus,
united in Bliss.

9

Difference itself merged in their sweet union
when, seeing their intimacy,
it could find no duality to enjoy.

10

Because of God, the Goddess exists;
and, without Her, He is not.
They exist only because of each other.

11

How sweet is their union!
The whole world is too small to contain them,
yet they live happily in the smallest particle.

12

They regard each other as their own Self,
and neither creates so much as a blade of grass
without the other.

13

These two are the only ones
who dwell in this home called “the universe”.
When the Master of the house sleeps,
the Mistress stays awake,
and performs the functions of both.

14

When He awakes,
the whole house disappears,
and nothing at all is left.

15

They became two for the purpose of diversity;
and both are seeking each other
for the purpose of becoming one.

16

Each is an object to the other,
and both are subjects to each other.
Only when together do they enjoy happiness.

17

It is Shiva alone who lives in all forms;
He is both the male and the female.
It is because of the union of these two
complements
that the whole universe exists.

18

Two lutes: one note.
Two flowers: one fragrance.
Two lamps: one light.

19

Two lips: one word.
Two eyes: one sight.
These two: one universe.

20

Though manifesting duality,
these two−the eternal Pair,
are eating from the same dish.

21

The Shakti, endowed with chastity and fidelity,
cannot live without Her Lord;
and without Her,
the Doer Of All cannot appear.

22

Since He appears because of Her,
and She exists because of Her Lord,
the two cannot be distinguished at all.

23

Sugar and its sweetness
cannot be separated from one another,
nor can camphor and its fragrance.

24

If there are flames,
there is also the fire.
If we catch hold of Shakti,
we have Shiva as well.

25

The Sun appears to shine because of its rays,
but it is the Sun itself, which produces the rays.
In act, that glorious Sun and its shining
are one and the same.

26

To have a reflection, one must have an object;
if we see a reflection,
then we infer that an object exists.
Likewise, the supreme Reality, which is one,
appears to be two.

27

Through Her,
the absolute Void becomes the manifest world;
but Her existence
is derived from Her Lord.

28

Shiva Himself became His beloved;
but, without Her presence,
no universe exists.

29

Because of Her form,
God is seen as the world;
but He created Her form
of Himself.

30

Embarrassed by Her formless Husband
and Her own graceful form,
she adorned Him with a universe
of myriad forms and names.

31

In unity, there is little to behold;
so She, the mother of abundance,
brought forth the world as a play.

32

She made evident the glory of Her Lord
by spreading out Her own body-form;
and He made Her famous
by concealing Himself.

33

He takes the role of Witness
out of love of watching Her;
but when Her appearance is withdrawn,
the role of Witness is abandoned as well.

34

Through Her,
He assumes the form of the universe;
without Her,
He is left naked.

35

Although He is manifest,
He, Himself, cannot be seen.
It is only because of Her

that He appears as universal form.

36

When He is awakened by Her,
Shiva perceives the world;
then He enjoys this dish She serves,
as well as She who serves.

37

While He sleeps, She gives birth
to the animate and inanimate worlds;
when She rests,
Her Husband disappears.

38

When He conceals Himself,
He cannot be discovered without Her grace.
They are as mirrors, each to the other.

39

When He embraces Her,
it is His own Bliss that Shiva enjoys.
He is the enjoyer of everything,
but there is no enjoyment without Her.

40

She is His form,

but Her beauty comes from Him.
By their intermingling,
they are, together, enjoying this feast.

41

Shiva and Shakti are the same,
like air and its motion,
or like gold and its luster.

42

Fragrance cannot be separated from musk,
nor heat from fire;
neither can Shakti be separated from Shiva.

43

If night and day were to approach the Sun,
both would disappear.
In the same way, their duality would vanish
if their essential unity were seen.

44

In fact, [the duality of] Shiva and Shakti
cannot exist in that primal unitive state
from which AUM emanates.

45

Jnanadev says,

I honor the primal pair of Shiva and Shakti
who, by swallowing up the sweet dish of name and form,
reveal their underlying unity.

46

Embracing each other,
they merge into one,
as darkness merges into light
at the breaking of dawn.

47

All levels of speech merge into silence
when their true nature is realized,
just as the ocean and the Ganges
both merge into the primal Waters
when the universal Deluge comes.

48

Then, the air, along with its motion,
merges into the universal Air;
the Sun, along with its brilliance,
merges into the elemental Fire at that time.

49

Likewise, while attempting to see Shiva and Shakti,
both the seer and his vision disappear.

Again and again,
I offer salutations to that universal pair.

50

They are like a stream of knowledge
from which a knower cannot drink
unless he gives up himself.

51

When such is the case,
if I remain separate in order to honor them,
it is only a pretended separation.

52

My homage is like that
of a golden ornament worshipping gold.

53

When my tongue says the word “tongue”,
is there any difference
between the organ which utters the word
and the object signified by that word?

54

Although the Ganges and the ocean are different,
when they commingle,
are their waters not the same?

55

The Sun is both the source
and the object of illumination;
still, it is only one.

56

If moonlight illumines the moon,
or if a lamp is revealed by its own light,
is there any separation here?

57

When the luster of a pearl
plays upon itself,
it only enhances itself.

58

Is the sound of AUM divided into three
simply because it contains three letters?
Or is the letter ‘N’ divided into three
because of the three lines by which it is formed?

59

So long as Unity is undisturbed,
and a graceful pleasure is thereby derived,
why should not the water find delight
in the floral fragrance of its own rippled surface?

60

It is in this manner, I bow
to the inseparable Shiva and Shakti.

61

A reflected image vanishes
when the mirror is taken away;
the ripples on the water vanish
when the wind becomes still.

62

A man returns to himself
when he awakens from sleep;
likewise, I have perceived the God and Goddess
by waking from my ego.

63

When salt dissolves in the ocean,
it becomes one with it;
when my ego dissolved,
I became one with Shiva and Shakti.

64

I have paid homage to Shiva and Shakti
by uniting with them;
just as, when the outer covering
of the hollow banyan tree is removed,

the inner space becomes united with the outer.